NCA
VOC FOR IOP/FN
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FORD: MORE FUNDS FOR SCIENCE

ANNCR:

PRESIDENT FORD HAS SENT A SPECIAL MESSAGE TO CONGRESS URGING AN ELEVEN PERCENT INCREASE IN FEDERAL FUNDS FOR SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT. VOA SCIENCE EDITOR LASZLO DOSA HAS THIS BACKGROUND REPORT.

VOICE:

MISTER FORD TOLD CONGRESS THAT "THIS COUNTRY'S FUTURE -- AND THAT OF ALL CIVILIZATION AS WELL -- DEPENDS ON NURTURING AND DRAWING ON THE CREATIVITY OF MEN AND WOMEN IN OUR SCIENTIFIC AND ENGINEERING COMMUNITY." WITH THOSE WORDS, THE PRESIDENT PROPOSED A U-S FEDERAL SCIENCE BUDGET OF TWENTY-FOUR-THOUSAND-SEVEN-HUNDRED-MILLION DOLLARS. THIS WOULD INCLUDE FUNDS FOR BASIC HEALTH RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT OF ALTERNATE ENERGY SOURCES, ENERGY CONSERVATION, MILITARY RESEARCH, AGRICULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES, CONTINUING DEVELOPMENT OF THE SPACE SHUTTLE, AS WELL AS TRANSPORTATION AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS.

ACTUALLY, MISTER FORD SUBMITTED THE FORMAL BUDGET REQUEST A COUPLE OF MONTHS AGO. BUT HIS MESSAGE TO CONGRESS SPELLS OUT IN SOME DETAIL WHAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WANTS TO SPEND IN VARIOUS AREAS OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT. LAST MONTH, AT THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE, LEADERS OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY EXPRESSED DEEP SATISFACTION OVER THE FACT THAT THE PRESIDENT WANTS INCREASE THE SCIENCE BUDGET AT A TIME HE IS TRYING TO REDUCE OVERALL FEDERAL SPENDING.

WHILE THE PROPOSED SCIENCE BUDGET, AS A WHOLE, IS ELEVEN PERCENT HIGHER THAN IN THE CURRENT YEAR, IT CALLS FOR A THIRTY-FIVE PERCENT INCREASE IN THE FEDERAL SUPPORT OF ENERGY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT. THIS INCLUDES FUNDS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOLAR AND GEOTHERMAL ENERGY, FUSION RESEARCH, AND FOR INCREASING THE SAFETY AND RELIABILITY OF NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS IN USE TODAY.

PRESIDENT FORD ALSO URGED CONGRESS TO SPEED UP ACTION ON THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF AN OFFICE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE WHITE HOUSE -- AN OFFICE THAT USED TO EXIST BUT WAS ABOLISHED DURING THE NIXON YEARS. THE HEAD OF THAT OFFICE WOULD ACT AS THE PRESIDENT'S SCIENCE ADVISOR. THIS PROPOSAL, TOO, ENJOYS WIDESPREAD SUPPORT IN THE U.S. SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY.

WJL/PY